

Here is a short resume of our trip to Japan, June 3-17, 2002, to visit Zachary. For those who care, more details are available in a more extensive report. I have also made a small, mostly pictorial summary of our trip. It has a few sentences and about ten pictures. It has been posted on the bulletin board outside my lab.

What I wrote in my bulletin board report says:

We went to visit Zach in Umaji. It's in Kōchi Prefecture in southeastern Shikoku (picture of Zach's house). We stayed at the Umaji Onsen, or コミュニティー・センター (picture of the onsen). We saw temples (Rokuon-Ji, aka Kinkaku-Ji), Castles (Himeji-Jo), and gardens (at Koko-en next to Himeji-Jo). We also saw some Buddhas (at Tōdai-Ji in Nara), learned all about Sakamoto Ryōma (important figure in Meiji restoration who came from Kōchi, near Umaji), and we were interviewed by the locals (at a bus stop in Kyōto). We also hiked in the cedar forest (forest picture) ate lots of strange food, and sampled many different kinds of sake (picture of people at dinner).

Final sight seeing count (according to Zach):

Buddhist Temples: 7

Shinto Shrines: 1

Castles: 4

Gardens (including those at temples/castles/shrines): 3

Other stuff: 1 cave, 1 wax figure museum, 1 Sunday Market

Street, numerous viewing platforms, stuff..

[Zech's pictures are at http://photos.yahoo.com/bc/za_piper]

That about sums it up. The things listed in parentheses tell what is shown in the pictures. I'm not convinced, however, that we didn't see more than three gardens. We seem to have an awful lot of garden pictures.

Now for just a bit more detail. We left on Monday, 3 June, early in the morning, and arrived at the airport in Osaka mid afternoon of Tuesday, 4 June. The last plane had already left for Kōchi, so we stayed in Osaka. We flew out of Osaka the next afternoon and arrived in Kōchi about 15 minutes before Zachary was due to arrive from a JET conference he had been attending in Tokyo. He showed up when he should have and we recognized each other. He had a friend, Paul, in tow so the 4 of us stuffed ourselves and our gear into his car and drove Paul home, then went to Umaji.

On Thursday and Friday, Zachary took us to two of the schools where he visits the kiddies. We went to Yanase Junior High on Thursday (a total

of 5 kids in all three classes (we combined 7th and 8th grades into one group, one kid each, and did the three 9th graders separately) then after we were done went off into the mountains above Yanase to walk about in the cedar forest. In the evening, we had dinner with the people from Zachary's office. They held the gathering at an old house in Umaji (100 to 150 years old (it looked like a set from a Kurusawa movie) and put on quite a spread. The next day we went to do the first 3 grades in Umaji elementary. When we were finished Hazel and I walked about town for a bit and bought her a hat. At the end of the day, Zachary's neighbor had us over to his house for dinner and once again put on quite a spread (including comparison tasting of sake).

On Saturday, we took the train north across Shikoku and the Seto Inland Sea and stopped at Okayama to see one of the three most beautiful gardens in Japan on our way to Kyōto. We holed up in Kyōto for several days, visited various shrines and temples, saw the burial place for Sakamoto Ryōma, saw a show demonstrating various classical Japanese art forms (koto, tea ceremony, geisha dancing, comedy skit in between parts of Noh play, bunraku puppetry, etc.), and took a day trip up to Nara to see some more shrines and temples. Nara seemed to be infested with school kids (and deer). Actually, the Kyōto seemed infested with school kids as well. While in Nara, Tuesday, June 11, rainy season officially began. That means it started pouring buckets. So we didn't stay there all that long. Fortunately, the rainy season took a hiatus for the rest of the time we were in Japan and didn't really get going again until after we left.

We took the train from Kyōto back toward Shikoku on Wednesday, June 12, and stopped at Himeji to see the famous castle there and walk around the gardens. Then we hopped back on the train back to Umaji via a bridge across the Seto Inland Sea and across Shikoku. Unfortunately, we were running a bit late and were not able to get back to Umaji to stay the night at the Onsen. So we found a Holiday Inn near Kōchi instead.

Zachary seemed to manage to get Thursday off so took us on a tour across his part of Shikoku. We drove through the mountains across from somewhere near Nahari over to Toyo then down along the coast past Cape Muroto and up the other coast towards Kōchi and eventually inland to Umaji where we settled back in at the onsen. In essence we did a sort of triangular route. Down near the point, we managed to visit one of the 88 shrines for which Shikoku is famous, no. 24. It's a sort of right of passage in Japan to do a pilgrimage to all 88 shrines. In theory one walks the route. In practice, a lot of people drive between them, or even take bus tours. That makes the pilgrimage something one can do in about a week as opposed to

the 3 or so months required to do the whole thing on foot. Still, some people do put on their white clothes and hike the whole thing.

Friday we had to go back to Umaji elementary school, this time for the older grades. That evening, the one restaurant in town was closed (and we had failed to make reservations for dinner at the onsen) so Zachary had to throw together some dinner for us. That was fine. We got a chance to spend a little time in his house (it has two rooms, each about 8x10 ft., so is crowded with more than one person in it, and may even be crowded with one).

Saturday, Zachary's band mates, took us around the sites of Kōchi. We visited the Ryogado Caves, the Sakamoto Ryōma wax museum, some overlook that had a replica of a European castle on it (nice view though), and the Katsurahama beach. In the evening they took us to a restaurant in Kōchi where we had quite a spread again after which we had a gentleman's night out on the town and I made my international debut as a lounge singer ("Stardust" and "My Blue Heaven").

Sunday morning, they took us to see Kōchi castle, another proper Japanese castle. Then the band mates headed back to Umaji. Zach, Hazel and I walked around Kōchi through the famous Sunday market. We kind of pooped out in the afternoon and napped a lot.

On Monday, June 17, we caught a plane out of Kōchi to Osaka and then from Osaka to Boston via Detroit. We got back to Reading at something like 8 or 9 p.m. the same day. Actually, I think our flight from Osaka arrived in Detroit an hour before it took off. Time zones are strange things, especially when the International Date Line is involved.

I think that pretty much covers the gist of what happened. As I mentioned, more details can be found in the file [VisitToZachInUmaji2002.pdf](#), and the pictures are in the file [WeWentToVisitZachInUmaji.pdf](#).